

Max Minsky and Me Study Notes



Directed by: Anna Justice

Certificate: PG

Running time: 94 mins

Synopsis

Nellie, an academic achiever with no school friends, daydreams of meeting Prince Edouard of Luxemburg at a basketball championship. Preferring sport to her upcoming Bar Mitzvah, she persuades cool Max Minsky to teach her how to play basketball, in exchange for completing his homework. This charming and funny film charts the growing friendship and trust between two teens coping with parental separation.

Before seeing the film

Key questions

1. Max Minsky and Me is a German film. What do you know about Germany? Find out about the language; the capital city; the people; the flag; the major rivers; the food and where it is in the world.
2. Look at the poster for Max Minsky and Me. How is it different to posters of American blockbusters? Why do you think this is?
3. In the film, the main character, Zoe has a crush on Prince Edouard, the Prince of Luxembourg. Find out about Luxembourg. Where is it in relation to Germany? Find out about the royal family.
4. Zoe is a science enthusiast, but she decides to try her hand at basketball in order to get the attention of the Prince. What is your best subject at school? What would be your worst? Write a story about your attempts to become good at something you are bad at just to win friends.
5. Zoe's family comes from America. They have moved to Germany to live in Berlin. Write a pretend diary entry imagining that you moved from your home town to Berlin. How would you feel? What would your expectations be?

After seeing the film

Task 1

Zoe dreams of becoming an astronomer one day. During the film, she imagines walking amongst the stars and re-arranging the constellations. Draw yourself doing the same. What shape would you make with the stars?

Task 2

Zoe is half Jewish, which means that one of her parents is Jewish, and she is meant to follow the religion of Judaism yet she spends a lot of time trying to get out of having a Bat Mitzvah. A Bat Mitzvah is a coming of age ceremony for Jewish girls – when girls become adults. It is the female version of the Bar Mitzvah for boys. Girls have this ceremony when they are 13. Which religion, if any, do you follow? Why do you think it is important to have ceremonies like Bar Mitzvahs? Create a storyboard showing a typical ceremony in your place of worship. How would you use the camera to show the building and the religious symbols within it?

NB: Teachers – older children could compare Max Minsky and Me to Jack Rosenthal's Bar Mitzvah Boy.